

Equality

in Islam



**Adopting Positive Characteristics
Leads to Peace of Mind**

Equality in Islam

ShaykhPod Books

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Acknowledgements

All praises are for Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds, who has given us the inspiration, opportunity and strength to complete this volume. Blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad whose path has been chosen by Allah, the Exalted, for the salvation of mankind.

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We pray that Allah, the Exalted, completes His favour on us and accepts each letter of this book in His august court and allows it to testify on our behalf on the Last Day.

All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace by upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his blessed Household and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

The following short book discusses some aspects of Equality in Islam. This discussion is based on Chapter 4 An Nisa, Verses 32-33 of the Holy Quran:

“And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Indeed Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing. And for all, We have made heirs to what is left by parents and relatives. And to those whom your oaths have bound [to you] - give them their share. Indeed Allah is ever, over all things, a Witness.”

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid one to Adopt Positive Characteristics. Adopting Positive Characteristics Leads to Peace of Mind and Body.

Equality in Islam

Chapter 4 – An Nisa, Verses 32-33

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبْنَ وَسَأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٢﴾

وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوَالِي مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلَّذِينَ عَقَدْتَ أَيْمَنُكُمْ فَأَتَوْهُمْ نَصِيْبُهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ﴿٣٣﴾

“And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Indeed Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing.

And for all, We have made heirs to what is left by parents and relatives. And to those whom your oaths have bound [to you] - give them their share. Indeed Allah is ever, over all things, a Witness.”

One of the tests of life in this world is to remain patient when one observes others who are granted more worldly blessings than them. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 20:

“...And We have made some of you [people] as trial for others - will you have patience? And ever is your Lord, Seeing.”

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 32:

“And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others...”

In this case, a person must never adopt envy, as it is a major sin which directly changes the distribution of worldly blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. Instead, one must accept that Allah, the Exalted, grants each person what is best for them. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allāh had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”

The person must also understand that peace of mind does not lie in obtaining more or specific worldly blessings. If this was true then the rich and famous would have obtained the most peace of mind in this world and this is clearly not the case. Peace of mind simply lies in correctly using the blessings one has been granted as outlined in Islamic teachings, whether this is a lot of worldly blessings or a little. This will ensure they obtain a balanced mental and physical state and correctly place everything and everyone within their life while adequately preparing for their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This behaviour will therefore lead to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 32:

“And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others...”

In reality, desiring more worldly blessings only increases one's test in this world as it becomes harder to correctly use worldly blessings when one has been granted more. Therefore, one must strive to adopt a simple lifestyle so that they find it easier to obtain peace of mind through correctly using the blessings they have been granted. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, that simplicity is a part of faith.

Furthermore, in order to protect oneself from envying others, one should observe those who possess less worldly blessings than them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4142. This will ensure they adopt gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for the blessings they have been granted. Gratitude in one's intention involves only acting in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Gratitude in one's speech involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And gratitude in one's actions involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who adopts gratitude in this way has been promised an increase in blessings, mercy and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“...If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

In addition, in order to ensure the world runs smoothly, Allah, the Exalted, had to grant different worldly blessings to each person. For example, if Allah, the Exalted, granted the ability and inspired everyone to become a doctor, then who would do the other important jobs which are needed for a society to survive, such as farming? Each person has been equipped with specific skills and worldly blessings so that they fulfill their part in society so that the world can move forward smoothly. This is in fact one of the signs within the world which indicates the presence of a Creator. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 32:

“...It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in degrees [of rank] that they may make use of one another for service...”

Allah, the Exalted, then further encourages people to concentrate on correctly using the blessings they have been granted so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds, instead of wasting their energy and time on comparing themselves to others. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 32:

“...For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned...”

Islam judges people based on a single criterion: how much they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”

All other standards of judging the status of people have no value, such as gender, ethnicity and social class, and must be ignored by muslims otherwise it gives rise to racism and disunity amongst the muslim nation. It is important to note that as one's intention is hidden from other people, they cannot judge others to be better than other people based on outward actions and must therefore refrain from making claims about the status of other people or themselves, as Allah, the Exalted, alone knows the intention, speech and actions of all people. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 32:

“...So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

Allah, the Exalted, then encourages those who desire good worldly things to seek them in the correct way. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 32:

“...And ask Allah of his bounty...”

Sadly, muslims have the habit of performing religious rituals, especially, spiritual exercises advised by other people that are not advised by the Holy Quran or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to gain something connected to the material world, such as a spouse, a child or a visa. Even though asking for worldly things is not prohibited in Islam yet when one's intention to perform religious rituals is solely based on worldly gain or is prioritized over gaining religious

blessings, such as peace of mind in both worlds, then it will lead to loss for them in both worlds, especially, in the hereafter, as they did not prioritize the hereafter in their intention. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 200:

“...And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share.”

In addition, as indicated by this verse, when one asks for worldly things, they do so without knowing if it is good for them, as they lack knowledge and foresight to determine this. Therefore, the very thing they are asking for may be harmful to them in this world as well as leading them to difficulties in the hereafter. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

It is therefore vital for muslims to adopt humility towards Allah, the Exalted, and accept their ignorance and lack of foresight in respect to the future instead of acting as if they know what is best for them.

In addition, adopting a worldly attitude towards Islam is disliked as one should instead strive to perform religious rituals for the sake of pleasing

Allah, the Exalted, and achieving peace of mind in both worlds. This was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. One should remain content with whatever Allah, the Exalted, grants them in this world, knowing it is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them, and remain steadfast on using that in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This alone leads to achieving peace of mind and success in both worlds and therefore is far better than demanding specific worldly things while being ignorant of their outcome. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 201:

"But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""

It is strange how a muslim can take medicines from a medical doctor which they did not specifically ask for while trusting their doctor has granted them what is best for their mental and physical health, yet, they do not place this level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, as they demand specific things from Him believing they know what is best for them instead of trusting in His choices and decisions. A muslim must therefore accept their lack of knowledge and foresight and ask for general good things in this world and in the next and leave the specifics to Allah, the Exalted, as He knows what is best for each person. This is why the good mentioned in verse 201 is general and not specific. The good mentioned in verse 201 is anything which one uses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, as this alone leads to good in both worlds. Anything which is misused in vain or sinful ways will never be good for a person and it will only become a source of stress, difficulties and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as Allah, the Exalted, controls their affairs, including their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 32:

"...For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah of his bounty..."

Another important thing to note is that this command to supplicate for the bounty of Allah, the Exalted, has been combined with sincerely obeying Him, by using the blessings one has been granted correctly as outlined in Islamic teachings. Similarly, every supplication in the Holy Quran and in the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is connected to acts of obedience. In addition, every supplication in the Holy Quran was performed by someone who was dedicated to acts of obedience. They strived throughout their life in using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This indicates the importance of understanding that supplications are only

truly effective when they are combined with acts of obedience. Sadly, many muslims have adopted a lazy attitude whereby they are good at performing supplications but will not practically obey Allah, the Exalted. This is because supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, requires minimal energy, time and no other resources, such as wealth. It is clear from the teachings of Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that supplications are meant to be supported by acts of obedience in order to be effective. Every step in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the lives of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, clearly shows how they physically obeyed Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they were granted correctly. They never only supplicated for relief or victory while refusing to act in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3499, clearly indicates that two special times within the day a supplication is responded to positively by Allah, the Exalted, are both connected to acts of obedience. The first time is directly after the obligatory prayers and the second is in the last part of night, when one should be performing the voluntary night prayer. In addition, the following verse clearly shows that supplications must be supported by acts of obedience in order to be complete and effective. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 10:

“...To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it...”

Failing to understand that supplications must be supported by physical acts of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is a major reason why the state of muslims does not change in a positive way, as one must change their intention, speech and actions in order to create a positive change in their life. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

“...Indeed, Allāh will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”

In addition, one must use the resources available to them, such as their energy, in order to create positive change within their lives and they cannot rely solely on supplications. For example, the person facing marriage issues with their spouse must take practical steps to resolve the issues and couple this with supplications to Allah, the Exalted, for help. They cannot behave in a lazy manner by avoiding practically taking steps to resolve the issues they are facing while relying only on their supplications to Allah, the Exalted. As already explained, this passive and incorrect attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam.

Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 32:

“...And ask Allah of his bounty...”

A part of accepting Allah, the Exalted, as one's Lord and accepting their servanthood to Him is to understand that as Allah, the Exalted, knows all things, He alone knows what is best for them and will therefore decide what

to grant them and what to withhold from them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 32:

“...Indeed Allah is ever, of all things, Knowing.”

The one who accepts this reality will accept the choices of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore remain patient and grateful at all times, whether they obtain their lawful worldly desires or not. Gratitude in one's intentions means acting solely to earn the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. When it comes to one's speech, gratitude is expressed through kind words or by choosing silence when necessary. In terms of one's actions, gratitude involves utilizing the blessings they have been granted in ways that align with what Allah, the Exalted, has instructed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In addition, patience involves avoiding complaining with one's speech or actions and remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, believing He only chooses what is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Therefore, the one who acts in the correct way in every situation will have the constant support and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to

peace of mind in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500.

After discussing the worldly blessings one is granted in this world, Allah, the Exalted, then mentions leaving these worldly blessings behind as an inheritance to others. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 33:

“And for all, We have made heirs to what is left by parents and relatives...”

It was and still is common practice to wrong others by creating wills which aim to remove certain people, especially relatives, from being an heir. So Allah, the Exalted, corrects this wrong attitude many times in the Holy Quran by allocating the exact shares the heirs of the deceased gets. The main verses under discussion were initially revealed and more specific and detailed verses regarding inheritance were revealed afterwards, which further clarified the exact shares the inheritors receive. It is important to understand that as people are biased, they will not be able to distribute their inheritance in a fair manner. The only One who can fairly distribute blessings while knowing what is best for each person is Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as all the worldly blessings a person possesses, such as wealth, has been created and granted by none other than Allah, the Exalted, He alone has the right to choose who inherits from a person and what their share should be. Therefore, a person has no right to question the inheritance procedure set by Islam, as the worldly things they possess do not belong to them.

In addition, the distribution of the inheritance Allah, the Exalted, commands is fair as each person receives a share according to their responsibilities. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 11:

“Allah instructs you concerning your children: for the male, what is equal to the share of two females. But if there are [only] daughters, two or more, for them is two thirds of one's estate. And if there is only one, for her is half...”

The father is accountable for the daily expenses of his unmarried daughter, while a husband takes on this responsibility for his wife. In the event of the father's passing, a brother is tasked with these expenses for his unmarried sister. In exceptional situations where a woman lacks a father, brother, or husband to support her financially, she must receive assistance from her other close relatives. If no close relatives are available, the Islamic government is obligated to cover her expenses. Should she reside in a non-Islamic state, the Muslims in her community are required to help her, even if she is not related to them. Consequently, Allah, the Exalted, has allocated a larger share of inheritance to men due to their greater financial responsibilities compared to women. Just as two employees in the same company do not receive equal pay because their responsibilities differ, it would be unjust to provide men and women with equal inheritance shares when their financial obligations are not the same. Furthermore, if a woman opts to contribute to household expenses, she will be rewarded for her efforts; however, the law of Allah, the Exalted, regarding her inheritance share remains unchanged, as her contribution was voluntary. If she was compelled to contribute to household expenses by people, the inheritance law is not at fault, and she will be rewarded by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds, provided she remains patient, but the inheritance law will not be altered for her. Since Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord and the woman is His

servant, He will compensate her in the best way possible, but the inheritance law will not be modified for her. If she genuinely believes in Allah, the Exalted, she will humbly accept His decision.

It is crucial to remember that before Islam, women were viewed as property that could be inherited by others, and the idea of them inheriting was considered ridiculous. Islam put an end to this unfair practice and granted them a mandatory portion of the inheritance.

Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 33:

“And for all, We have made heirs to what is left by parents and relatives...”

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of fulfilling the rights of others. Both aspects of Islam must be fulfilled in order to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. The first aspect is fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as the five daily obligatory prayers. The second aspect is fulfilling the rights of people, such as ensuring one's inheritance is distributed according to Islamic law to their best of their ability. Sadly, it is common practice for many muslims to strive in fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, while neglecting the rights of people, believing they will achieve success in this manner as they wrongfully believe Allah, the Exalted, does not care about the rights of others. It is important to understand that any wealth or other worldly things which are obtained in an

unlawful way will only become a curse for its bearer as all the good actions they perform with those unlawfully acquired things will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted, and only increase their sins and punishment in both worlds, if they fail to sincerely repent. This is because the outward foundation of Islam is earning and utilizing the lawful, just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention. If one's foundation is corrupt then anything that comes from it will be corrupt and therefore rejected by Allah, the Exalted, even if they are good deeds. It does not take a scholar to conclude the outcome of the one who behaves in this manner on Judgement Day.

In addition, all muslims should know that on Judgement Day justice will be established. A person will be forced to hand of their good deeds to all those they had wronged in the world and if necessary, they will be forced to take the sins of those who they wronged. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Therefore, one must strive to fulfil the rights of people, just like they must strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted. The former is best achieved when one treats others in a way they themselves desire to be treated by people. This involves aiding others in things which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and warning them against the things which are displeasing to Allah, the Exalted, as the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, must be prioritized over all other things, people and relationships.

Allah, the Exalted, also commands people to fulfil their promises with a specific example. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 33:

“...And to those whom your oaths have bound [to you] - give them their share...”

It is an aspect of hypocrisy to break one's promises without a valid reason. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749. The one who adopts the characteristics of a hypocrite must fear that they may well end up with them in the hereafter. A muslim must therefore fulfil all the promises they have made. The most important of these is the promise of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, under every circumstance when they accepted Him as their Lord. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is important to note that this promise is a practical one. Therefore, it goes far beyond verbally claiming faith in Allah, the Exalted. Fulfilling the promises made to people are also important as one will be held accountable for this on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 34:

“...And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned.”

These promises include the unspoken and unwritten ones also, such as when one has a child. Having a child automatically bounds the parent to a promise of fulfilling the child's rights according to the teachings of Islam. These promises also include worldly ones, such as business transactions and financial deals. A muslim must not attempt to separate their worldly affairs from their religious affairs while believing the worldly aspects of their

life has no interest to Allah, the Exalted. This is a foolish attitude as Islam is a complete way of life and code of conduct which affects every breath a person takes and every situation they are involved in, whether they appear worldly or religious. Therefore, one must think deeply before committing to any responsibility, as all responsibilities in this world are bound by some type of promise which will be questioned about on Judgement Day.

One must therefore strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, such as giving them their rightful share of the inheritance, as Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their intentions, speech and actions and will hold them accountable in both worlds. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 33:

“...Indeed Allah is ever, over all things, a Witness.”

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